

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY
STANDING COMMITTEE
MINUTES

November 13, 2013

PRESENT: Councillor Barry Dalrymple, Chair
Councillor Jennifer Watts, Vice Chair
Deputy Mayor Reg Rankin
Councillor Lorelei Nicoll
Councillor Darren Fisher
Councillor Bill Karsten
Councillor Steve Craig

STAFF: Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Mr. Josh Judah, Solicitor
Mr. Gord Helm, Manager, Solid Waste Resources
Mr. Richard MacLellan, Manager, Energy and Environment
Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager, Real Property Planning
Ms. Holly Richardson, Coordinator Real Property Planning
Mr. Rob Jahnke, Landscape Architect, Real Estate & Land
Management
Mr. Quentin Hill, Legislative Assistant

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1. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. in the Halifax City Hall Council Chamber, 1841 Argyle Street, Halifax.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 13, 2013

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll, that the minutes of November 13, 2013, be approved as circulated. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

3. APPROVAL OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND APPROVAL OF ADDITIONS AND DELETIONS

Additions:

- 8.2 Memorandum of Understanding with Clean NS
- 8.3 Community Energy Plan Revision, Desired Outcomes
- 8.4 Role of ESSC in Solid Waste Review

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Craig, that the agenda be approved as amended. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

4. BUSINESS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

4.1 Status Sheet

Councillor Craig requested that the status sheet be reviewed and include updated information. He added that some of the items are quite dated and may not necessarily need to be before the Committee.

Mr. Mike Labrecque, Deputy CAO, advised that once the Committee has received the report or the Committee deems an item to be dealt with somewhere else, then the item should be removed from the status sheet. He advised that the status sheet is used by staff to make sure staff is following the direction of the Committee and it should be used to manage the agenda and move items forward.

In response to questions from Councillor Craig, Mr. Labrecque clarified that if the Committee considers a report and forwards it to Regional Council, unless it is requested to come back, then the Committee's work is done and the item should be removed from the status sheet.

Mr. Gord Helm, Manager Solid Waste Resources, advised that staff had visited Dan – X. He explained that the issue with Dan – X remains that they are unable to economically find a way transport their phosphorus dust which continues to be stored. He added that the policy and direction of Council was that materials would not be sent to the third world or become someone else’s problem. He said currently Dan – X is working on a satisfactory solution for HRM.

The Committee agreed to remove the following items from the status sheet:

- DAN-X Recycling
- District Energy
- Presentation from Nova Scotia Power regarding Power Shift Atlantic

5. CONSIDERATION OF DEFERRED BUSINESS – NONE

6. CORRESPONDENCE, PETITIONS & DELEGATIONS

6.1 Correspondence - None

6.2 Petitions – None

6.3 Presentation

6.3.1 Nova Scotia Home Builders Association (NSHBA)

Mr. Paul Pettipas addressed the Committee. He advised he was there to speak on the Planning for Solar Energy report recently provided to the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee. He added that the NSHBA supports renewable energy and solar energy. Mr. Pettipas explained that they supported solar energy but felt the most important aspect in building is the building envelope. He advised that the NSHBA supported some of the recommendations but disagreed with a few. He provided the following feedback in response to the report.

Lead by example: Mr. Pettipas felt this was an important recommendation in the report. He explained that if governments wanted private industry to do things, then it was important for governments to take the lead in new and cutting edge initiatives.

Start in Rural Areas: He stated that you cannot really dictate how people position their homes. Mr. Pettipas added that it would be difficult to force people to build their homes in a certain way. He suggested it would be more important to educate them and let them know the savings by providing information on where they can save by utilizing various energy saving methods.

Solar Planning Policy Development: Mr. Pettipas raised concern about another group coming forward and adding more policy to an already heavily governed industry.

Solar Ready: The problem is the different solar formats require a different solar ready. Let the industry figure out what is best to determine solar ready.

Higher a planner: Mr. Pettipas cautioned adding a planner strictly tasked with solar planning. He added that there is a shortage of planning staff in HRM. The NSHBA did not see it as a smart use of resources where there is currently a shortage of planners and a backlog of projects.

Energy Labels: All new homes have to meet the energy standard. He agreed that having a performance test completed when buying a home. However, he added that this would be a provincial mandate.

Solar Ready Bylaw: Mr. Pettipas explained that being solar ready does not necessarily equate to saving energy. He also cautioned subsidizing solar ready.

Solar Vision: He agreed this was a good idea as long as it was based on voluntary use and education. Mr. Pettipas recommended that instead of enacting bylaws, to make it easier for others to make the change to new technology.

Councillor Watts stated that she looked forward to the report coming forward in December that would look at the recommendations from QUEST and the input from Mr. Pettipas and the NSHBA.

In response to Councillor Nicoll, Mr. Pettipas suggested that a heat pump would have to be very old in order to cause a complaint under the noise bylaw. He added that newer heat pumps are continually becoming smaller. He stated that the NSHBA would be willing to provide the HRM planning department a one page document on best practices on installing the heat pumps.

Councillor Craig noted it is difficult for residents to know what the rules and regulations are on any building project. He wanted to know where residents can go to find an authoritative voice to provide information on what the rules are surrounding projects homeowners are undertaking.

Mr. Pettipas advised that most of the information in the building industry is passed on by the non-profit groups in the industry. He added that the information does get out from builders, planning staff and other organizations it just required a bit of research.

The Chair thanked Mr. Pettipas for his presentation and responding to questions from the Committee.

6.3.2 Ecology Action Centre – 7 Lakes Project

Ms. Jocelyn Rankin and Ms. Jennifer West from the Ecology Action Centre provided the presentation to the Committee. Ms. Rankin advised that she had presented to ESSC earlier in the year and wanted to return and provide an update to the Committee.

Ms. Rankin explained the purpose of the project was to look at flooding issues and groundwater issues, both she added, are issues which face HRM. She explained that the EAC are working the pilot project alongside a new development in Porters Lake to quantify the ability of low impact design methods to reduce stormwater runoff, control pollution loading and enhance groundwater infiltration. She noted that stormwater infiltration has the ability to replenish groundwater aquifers.

Ms. Rankin provided the following highlights of the development:

- Phase 1 (2013 – 2014) Road construction and approximately 100 homes to be built.
- Test wells have been drilled with good yields
- Construction of tertiary-level wastewater treatment system located at the top of the catchment area.
- Operation of the treatment plant and other infrastructure will be overseen by the board.

Ms. Rankin and Ms. West then responded to questions of clarification from the Committee.

Councillor Dalrymple thanked Ms. Rankin and Ms. West for the presentation. The Councillor clarified that Council alongside the province has now ordered that hydrogeological testing in order to ensure there is enough groundwater for developments.

6.3.3 Bag to Earth – Peter Ryan

Mr. Peter Ryan provided a presentation to the Committee.

Mr. Ryan stated that mandated paper bags for yard waste began in 1992 and now there many municipalities across Canada. Mr. Ryan claimed that the bags are made mostly with recyclable materials and produced in Canada. Mr. Ryan provided the following benefits for switching to the use of paper bags for yard waste:

- No need to debug paper bags containing yard waste
- No need for storage and removal of plastic bags
- Paper bags break down
- Fiber is renewable and sustainable
- Cost is comparable to plastic bags
- Financial savings to the municipality from not having to debug yard waste

Deputy Mayor Rankin questioned if the paper bags are strong and resistant, if they would also have issues breaking down in the compost. He questioned staff if paper bags were previously rejected because they did not break down quickly, why paper bags now were being considered for yard waste.

Mr. Gord Helm, Manager Solid Waste, reminded the Committee that there is an overview of the solid waste strategy underway. He added that HRM has always desired to produce a high quality compost to bring back to residents and that required looking at all options to produce higher grade compost. He further explained that plastic was not wanted in organics as it is contaminate; and anything that can be done to eliminate contaminates while promoting increased diversion is what is being considered.

Further discussion ensued with Mr. Ryan and Mr. Helm responding to questions of clarification.

The Chair thanked Mr. Ryan for his presentation.

7. REPORTS

7.1 Staff

7.1.1 Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan Final Draft

The following items were before the Committee:

- Staff report dated October 24, 2013
- Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Pan: Final Draft – October 2013

Mr. Peter Bigelow, Manager Real Property Planning, Ms. Holly Richardson, Coordinator Real Property Policy and Rob Jahncke, Landscape Architect, Real Estate & Land Management provided the presentation to the Committee.

Mr. Bigelow explained that the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space plan is not a 'parks plan.' He added that the Regional Plan calls for a comprehensive approach to open space and includes all lands that are not occupied by a building. Open space is areas such as water, forests, fields, sports fields and street squares.

Mr. Bigelow clarified the three functions to open space that concerns HRM:

1. Service Provision – recreation and active transportation
2. Protection – ensuring natural and cultural heritage and environmental protection which protecting natural systems which sustain us all.
3. Shaping the community – open space contributes to community design, community social cohesion and identity.

He added that the purpose of the plan was to capture the open space values in the area. He advised there was public consultation, and used the Regional Plan and the 5 MPS documents for the area and created direction as it related to open space.

Ms. Richardson provided background on the methodology used to produce the plan and some of the key findings. Ms. Richardson stated that they went out and consulted with the community to see what the values and issues were in respect to open space. She added that they looked at all the open space assets in the study area such as the natural systems, HRM parks and the corridor network which includes trails and streets. She noted the following core community values which were threaded in the planning framework; identity, connectivity and sustainability.

Mr. Jahnke stated there are 40 recommendations, 28 policy guidelines and 4 goals in the report. He added there was six focus areas in the study: Little Salmon River Corridor, Coal Harbour Estuary, Bisset System, Cow Bay, District Hub (Forrest Hills/Colby Village), Corridor Network. Mr. Jahnke outlined the recommendations and findings in the six focus areas.

MOVED by Councillor Nicoll, seconded by Councillor Karsten that the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee recommend Regional Council to:

- 1) Adopt the Cole Harbour Basin Open Space Plan as a policy guideline and implementation framework contributing to:**
 - **Public open space land planning**
 - **Open space programming and service delivery**
 - **Integrated open space, land-use and infrastructure planning; and**
- 2) The Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee forward this report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee as an information item.**

Councillor Nicoll was pleased with the report and thanked the staff involved in preparing the report. She added that the report captures the balance of the area and it provides the basis for all future planning in the area.

In response to questions and comments from the Committee, Mr. Bigelow advised that staff could provide a presentation at Regional Council when the report goes forward. He added that as the report goes forward, the report is only a guideline. He explained further that the Bylaws, Charter and MPS documents are the only rules in force, but the plan would act as a guideline by staff to be used for the study area.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

8. MOTIONS - NONE

9. ADDED ITEMS

9.1 MOU Clean Nova Scotia

MOVED by Councillor Watts, seconded by Deputy Mayor Rankin to refer correspondence to staff for a report on the opportunities and implications of a Memorandum of Understanding with Clean Nova Scotia.

A brief discussion ensued.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED

9.2 Community Energy Plan Revision

Due to lack of time, Councillor Watts withdrew this matter.

9.3 Role of ESSC in Solid Waste Review

Councillor Watts expressed concern that the Committee had not been as involved as much as it should have in the Solid Waste Review process. She wanted clarification on what the Committee had been tasked with and if that had happened. She added that perhaps the Committee could discuss this matter at the next meeting due to lack of time.

Councillor Craig added that he was not pleased with how the whole process had unfolded. He suggested that the Committee should wait until after the report goes to Regional Council.

Further discussion ensued and the Committee agreed to defer this until after the December Regional Council session addressing the Solid Waste Review.

10. NOTICES OF MOTION

11. NEXT MEETING DATE - December 5, 2013

12. SELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE – CHAIR

Mr. Quentin Hill, Legislative Assistant called for nominations for the position of Chair.

MOVED by Deputy Mayor Rankin, seconded by Councillor Nicoll to nominate Councillor Dalrymple as Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee.

Mr. Hill called three times for further nominations, hearing none nominations were closed.

MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

Mr. Hill turned the meeting over to the Chair. The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice – Chair.

MOVED by Councillor Karsten, seconded by Councillor Nicoll to nominate Councillor Watts as Vice - Chair of the Environment and Sustainability Standing Committee. MOTION PUT AND PASSED.

13. IN CAMERA - NONE

14. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

Quentin Hill
Legislative Assistant